

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 EB-08 COME-00
TRSE-00 OMB-01 AGRE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /103 W
-----261458Z 052306 /46

R 260830Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6894

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USUN NYK 523

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XI, EAID, MR, MO

SUBJECT: MOROCCAN DELEGATION LED BY PRIME MINISTER VISITS MAURITANIA

1. ROYAL AIR MAROC 737 DISGORGED FULL PLANE LOAD OF
MOROCCAN VISITORS ONTO NOUAKCHOTT TARMAC AT HIGH NOON JANUARY
21, FULL HOUR BEHIND SCHEDULE; PRIME MINISTER OSMAN
MINISTER COMMERCE, MINES AND MERCHANT MARINE PLUS LARGE,
DISTINGUISHED GROUP OF STATE MINISTERS, AMBASSADORS AND
SENIOR ECONOMIC TECHNOCRATS 15 PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA
JOURNALISTS SUPPORTED BY MOTION AND STILL PHOTOGRAPHS; PLUS AT
LEAST 15 ARMED AND RADIO-EQUIPPED SECURITY AGENTS.
WELCOMED BY MINISTER OF STATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND MEMBER
NATIONAL POLITICAL BUREAU OULD MOUKNASS LEADING DELEGATION
OF MAURITANIAN ECONOMIC TECHNOCRATS PRIME MINISTER OSMAN
INSPECTED HONOR GUARD, GREETED ASSEMBLED GIRM OFFICIALS,
NOTABLES, LOCAL MOROCCAN OFFICIALS AND RESIDENTS, AND
FOREIGN DIPLOMATS, AND THEN TOLD WAITING PRESS CORPS THAT VISIT,
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IN RESPONSE TO INVITATION OF MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT, IS
"OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE", "WILL CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TOWARD
UNITING US STILL FURTHER", AND WILL PROVIDE OCCASION TO DISCUSS
"ALL SORTS OF BILATERAL PROBLEM -- PROBLEMS OF COOPERATION
WHICH ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE", AND TO "REVIEW PROBLEMS OF
REGION, OF AFRICA, AND ALL SORTS OF INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS".

2. TWO DELEGATIONS THEN LAUNCHED INTO WHIRLWIND OF WORKING AND SOCIAL SESSIONS, INCLUDING: COURTESY CALL BY TWO DELEGATIONS ON PRESIDENT, TWO PRIVATE SESSIONS BETWEEN PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND PRIME MINISTER OSMAN, TWO PLENARY SESSIONS OF FULL DELEGATIONS, SERIES OF SUBCOMMISSION WORKING MEETINGS ON SPECIFIC TOPICS AND PROBLEMS, FLYING VISIT TO SENTGAL RIVER VALLEY CITY OF KAEDI, LAYING CORNER STONE OF MOROCCAN-FINANCED ISLAMIC CENTER (MOSQUE, SCHOOL, AND YOUTH HOSTEL IN NOUAKCHOTT; PLUS: FORMAL LUNCH HOSTED BY MOUKNASS, "STATE DINNER" HOSTED BY PRESIDENT (WHERE PRIME MINISTER KEPT PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND ASSEMBLED NOTABLES WAITING FOR QUARTER OF AN HOUR), "COCKTAIL". HOSTED BY MOROCCAN AMBASAADOR, DINNER BY PRIME MINISTER (ALL ATTENDED BY TOP ECHELON GIRM BUREAUCRACY, DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND SWARMS OF PHOTOGRAPHERS AND SECURITY OFFICERS), AND LUNCHEON FOR DELEGATIONS HOSTED BY GIRM MINSTATE FOR INTERNAL SOVEREIGNTY (CIVILIAN CHIEF OF ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES).

3. LATE AFTERNOON JANUARY 23, PRIME MINISTER OSMAN, OULD MOUKNASS, AND MEMBERS OF TWO DELEGATIONS FINALLY APPEARED AT AIRPORT FOR DEPARTURE CEREMONIES TWO AND A HALF HOURS BEHIND SCHEDULE. UNSUBSTANTIATED RUMOR ASSERTED DELAY STEMMED FROM PROBLEMS RAISED BY REPORTS OF THREE SUBCOMMISSIONS TO FINAL PLENARY AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN EDITING OF JOINT COMMUNIQUE. IN DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE, PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR WARM WELCOME, HOMMAGE TO WISE POLICY OF GIRM PRESIDENT, AND DECLARED HE HAD BECOME OPTIMISTIC ABOUT "THIS COUNTRY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHICH IS MY SECOND HOMELAND". AFTER NOTING GIRM AND GOM ARE WORKING TIRELESSLY FOR ARAB-AFRICAN DIALOGUE AND "ARAB MAGHREB", PRIME MINISTER OBSERVED "WE ARE CONDEMNED TO WORK TOGETHER EVERY DAY". RESPONDING TO QUESTION ON SAHARA PRIME MINISTER STATED, "REUNIFICATION HAS NECESSITATED MUCH EFFORT. IT CANNOT BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY. GREAT PATIENCE IS REQUIRED. BUT PATIENCE DOES NOT SIGNIFY WEAKNESS. WE ARE FOR PEACE, BUT WE WILL DEFEND OUR RIGHTS."

4. HARD FACTS RE CONTENT AND FLAVOUR OF DISCUSSIONS ARE VERY SCARCE AT THIS POINT. AT VISIT MID-POINT, TWO GIRM PARTICIPANTS REPORTED THAT TALKS WERE GOING WELL, AND EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION BUT THEY DECLINED FIRMLY TO ELABORATE. PRESIDENCY ASSISTANT SYG FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS REPORTED THAT KAEDI TRIP WAS SET UP (IN PART) TO PERMIT IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION OF POSSIBILITY OF DEVELOPING EXPORT OF FROZEN BEEF TO MOROCCO VIA AIR, USING SLAUGHTER HOUSE AND QUICK FREEZE FACILITIES ALREADY IN BEING. VERDICT BY MOROCCAN TECHNOCRATS REPORTEDLY WAS THAT SUCCESSFUL PENETRATION OF MOROCCAN

MARKET WAS POSSIBLE, BUT ONLY IF MAURITANIANS SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE QUALITY OF LOCAL CATTLE, ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN RIGID STANDARDS OF ANIMAL HEALTH AND OF PROCESSING SANITATION, AND INSURE REGULAR, DEPENDABLE AIR FREIGHT SERVICE.

5. HEAVY SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC APPEARANCES, SYSTEMATIC AND PERSISTENT RE-ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRESENCE AND MOVEMENT AROUND CAPITAL BY WAILING SIRENED MOTORCADES, REPEATED SUBORDINATION OF LIVE INTERACTION AMONG PRINCIPALS TO INTERVIEW AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES FOR OMNI PRESENT NEWSMAN SUGGEST VISIT WAS CONCEIVED AS MUCH AS MEDIA EVENT FOR POLITICAL PR PURPOSES AS WORKING SESSION FOR DEVELOPMENT OR COOPERATION OBJECTIVES. INTERACTION BETWEEN MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCAN PRINCIPALS, DELEGATION MEMBERS, AND OTHER GIRM OFFICIALS APPEARED WARM AND FRIENDLY; ENTHUSIASTIC WELCOME ACCNDED MOROCCANS BY NOUAKCHOTT AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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KAEDI STREET CROWDS APPEARED GENUINE. REACTION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL MAURITANIANS AND PRIVATE THOUGHTS OF GIRM OFFICIALS WILL BECOME APPARENT ONLY SLOWLY, AFTER EXCITEMENT DIES DOWN AND RECOLLECTIONS OF FRATERNAL WARMTH FADE A BIT. SEEMS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL, HOWEVER, THAT SUSPICIONS (AND INDEED ANTAGONISMS) OF PAST EIGHTEEN YEARS CAN BE OVERCOME BY ONE OR EVEN A SERIES OF MEDIA VISITS, NO MATTER HOW SUCCESSFUL, WHILE POLITICAL AND MILITARY REALITIES HAVE FORCED GIRM OFFICIALS THIS PAST YEAR TO ACCEPT CLOSE NEW ASSOCIATION WITH MOROCCO, PRIVATE MAURITANIAN CITIZENS (ESPECIALLY YOUNGER "SOCIALIST" MILITANTS WHO LOOK BACK NOSTALGICALLY TO HEADY DAYS OF POLITICAL ALLIANCE WITH ALGERIA) HAVE NOT FELT NEED TO FOLLOW SUIT. HANDY SIDE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRIME MINISTER, MEETING DELEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 26-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NOUAKC00152
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770028-0595
Format: TEL
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770116/aaaaaodi.tel
Line Count: 153
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 842608d1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3496524
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOROCCAN DELEGATION LED BY PRIME MINISTER VISITS MAURITANIA
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, XI, MR, MO, (OSMAN, AHMED)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/842608d1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009